



Dear Fellow Kentuckians:

In today's community development discussion, so much energy is devoted to the idea of increasing access to and usage of broadband (high-speed Internet) and computers. As ConnectKentucky Co-Chairs, we submit that this strategy is vital to the future success of the Commonwealth. ConnectKentucky is charged with carrying out Kentucky's *Prescription for Innovation* and we appreciate the support that we receive from partners such as the Commonwealth Office of Technology, the Kentucky League of Cities, Kentucky Association of Counties, and Area Development Districts and ask that we continue to work together to ensure the success of this progressive plan.

Understandably, there is some skepticism that technology poses a risk to our Kentucky heritage or to the traditional definition of community. However, investment in broadband-enabled technology provides a unique opportunity to preserve our heritage by creating opportunities for our children and capitalizing on our inherent common strengths. Access to technology in our rural communities is enabling a boon for entrepreneurs who are creating technology-centric businesses in the fields of agriculture, advanced automotive engineering, biotechnology, logistics, and trade.

Governor Fletcher's "*Prescription for Innovation*" established aggressive goals for broadband deployment and technology adoption (usage) for all Kentuckians, including:

1. Broadband availability for all Kentuckians, businesses and local governments by 2007;
2. Dramatically improved adoption of computers and the Internet;
3. Meaningful online applications for local government, businesses, educators, and other sectors; and
4. Local technology leadership teams in every county promoting technology growth for: local government, business, education, healthcare, agriculture, libraries, tourism, and city-based organizations.

As ConnectKentucky works throughout the Commonwealth to implement the *Prescription for Innovation*, we are continually encouraged by the response in every community. Recently in Phelps, the local food pantry unveiled a new service: Internet and computer training made possible through newly available broadband service. When participants finish the multi-session training program, they are provided a refurbished computer to take home to their family. As the pantry's director put it, "now we are really helping people help themselves." That sentiment encapsulates perfectly what is happening all across the Commonwealth as Kentucky is investing in technology for all citizens.

The *Prescription for Innovation* has established the Commonwealth as a national model for technology-based development. Over the past two years, Kentucky has achieved growth rates in technology availability and adoption that lead the nation. In leading this effort, ConnectKentucky partners are working to ensure that Kentucky remains the place of choice to work, live, and raise a family. Kentucky is transforming from a technology laggard into a national leader in universal access and innovative technology solutions. Consider that:

- In 2003, about 60% of Kentucky households had the ability to subscribe to broadband. Over the last two years, that number has grown to 77%, an addition of more than 240,000 households able to access broadband at home. Increased investment by broadband companies is expected to bring availability to 90% by the end of 2006, in line with the goal of full broadband availability for all Kentuckians by the end of 2007.



ConnectKentucky: Accelerating Technology in the Commonwealth!

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- Over the last two years the growth rate of new subscribers to high-speed Internet in Kentucky was the highest in the nation. During that time, home broadband usage in Kentucky has increased to 32% from 22%.

It remains a priority of ConnectKentucky to ensure that our work is of the highest relevance to you and your community. In creating local technology leadership teams across Kentucky, ConnectKentucky focuses much time and energy towards identifying the applications that are enabled by better connections to the Internet. Consider the following list of

e-government applications that have been identified by local leadership teams as priorities.

- Remote video arraignment has become more affordable as broadband Internet access has spread. This broadband-based application saves money and improves safety as prisoner transport is minimized.
- Community planning and development is more effective through applications made possible by broadband. Many communities in Kentucky are already using GIS-based maps and planning tools to account for numerous changing variables with the click of a mouse. Constituents are using similar tools to conduct land plat and title searches.
- Online licensing, permitting and registrations are allowing local governments to improve efficiency and better serve constituents. As more citizens have access to broadband, more individuals want to interact with government online.
- Online tax payments, court payments and legal transactions save money and time by improving cycle times and reducing overhead.
- Online procurement applications save government agencies money and improve the quality of goods and services provided. Broadband-enabled applications such as reverse auctions and Internet-based RFPs save both time and money.

Though Kentucky's recent technology progress has been swift, many in our rural communities still find themselves on the wrong side of the digital divide. If we do not dare to dream of what the future could hold for the Commonwealth, we are destined to remain at the bottom of many economic rankings. Kentuckians must dream big and plan not only for ways to compete, but for ways to excel. We must dream about a new day for our state and its economy. We envision that not only will Kentucky provide world-class technology for its citizens and businesses, but that individuals and companies around the globe will come to recognize Kentucky as a center for economic and job growth. We appreciate the willingness of our partners to be an engaged and supportive and we look forward to working with you and your community very soon.

Sincerely,

John R. Hall
Retired Chairman and CEO, Ashland Inc.
ConnectKentucky Co-Chair

Honorable Ellen Williams
Commissioner, GOLD
ConnectKentucky Co-Chair



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